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CONTENTS.

		Page.
1.	Wayside Gatherings ..	Front.
2.	Notes of the Month ..	584
3.	Correspondence ..	584
4.	The Josephine Butler Centenary	586
5.	Temperance Notes. ..	586
6.	Power.	588
7.	Toc H. and Unitarian Padres	589
8.	Heresy. ..	589
9.	Reports. ..	590

Wayside Gatherings.

War, and the Prayer Book.

Which is the more important, peace among nations or the revision of the Prayer Book? Dr. F. W. Norwood, speaking at a luncheon in connection with the Metropolitan Free Church Federation meetings said: "If we tolerate a treaty between the two great English-speaking countries which envisages war as a method of settling our differences, we shall have deliberately hauled down the flag. It will be an inane thing if we are not able to make vocal the conviction of the church that these two countries at least shall be able to settle their differences by law and not by war. But I suppose we shall be more busy about the Prayer Book. I am not at all lukewarm on that subject; only it won't matter very much whether men partake of the Communion under one set of views or the other. If this war system remains, we shall both alike go down to Hades as virtual deniers of the Christ."

* * *

The late Lord Oxford.

"Lord Oxford was a great statesman—his political opponents would hardly question that—and perhaps the greatest master of statecraft that we have had in the last half-century. But greater than his statecraft or his rich reverberant oratory was. the superlative integrity of his character. Alike magnaminous to opponents and chivalrous to his colleagues, he won that type of respectful admiration which is granted only to men of character. Of him it may truly be said that he nothing common did or mean in the whole course of his political career."—A.P. in "The Christian World."

* * *

The Roman Priest's Lecture.

The following story of a Roman Catholic Priest's lecture has just come under my notice. The subject was "Judaism, Protestantism, and Catholicism." After speaking for half-an-hour the Priest ended by saying: "Now I have come to the end of my lecture, but before you go I want to illustrate my arguments with a symbol." So he produced a new walnut and said: "This represents Judaism, Protestantism and Catholicism. The Green outside is bitter, full of sourness, and you cannot enjoy it. It is better to throw it away. It stands for Judaism." He stripped the walnut of its outside husk and cast it away. Then he said: "Now we come to the shell. This also is not good; you cannot eat it for it is hard and woody. It represents Protestantism." Finally, with a smile of contentment, he concluded by saying: "We now come to the kernel, the edible substance, the part which is full of sweetness and food. It represents our Roman Catholic apostolic religion." When he opened the shell, to his consternation and embarassment the kernel had rotted away.

* * *

The New Church at Cambridge.

Preaching at Cambridge, at the dedication of the new Memorial Church, Dr. Bowie concluded his sermon with these words: "Dedicating this church, we would unite in banishing from our souls all ignoble thoughts. Here may anxious souls unite and find relief and rest, here may those who mourn be comforted, those who are despairing learn to face life anew, those who are broken be restored and healed, those who are weakened find their power to withstand temptation strengthened, those who are concerned with present inequalities find the incentive to lend a hand in securing the betterment of the slum dweller, the re-creation of the out of work. And may the beauty of that place have its counterpart in the beauty of strength of its worship."

—A. W.

Notes of the Month.

Controversy and Re-union of the Churches.

During these days of acute controversy respecting the Anglican Prayer Book the hankering after a re-union of Christian Churches appears to be more and more a remote possibility. This impression has deepened as a result of the Pope's Encyclical issued last month where it is declared that the only possible re-union is by the return of all to the Church of Rome. Plausible lip-service is paid to the desired end of re-union. The method of attaining the same in practically every responsible quarter appears to be a rigid adherence to the doctrines and practices observed by the particular Church to which the various controversialists happen to belong. It would thus seem that the urge to a uniformity of belief and practice does not seem as yet to be in process of being eradicated. It is astonishing that this desire for uniformity, so often exposed as impracticable owing to the prevalence of deep, conscientious convictions, should be persisted in to the detriment of spiritual religion and the principles of goodwill and toleration. It may be that dislike and distrust of acrimonious controversy has something to do with the craving for uniformity of religious beliefs and practices. It is, nevertheless, humiliating in the case of religious disputes. These are apt to foment ungodly passions which are incompatible with the religion of the spirit. Constituted as human nature has been and is, there is no possibility that varieties of conscientious beliefs can ever be permanently suppressed or smoothed over to make way for a uniform consistency of outlook and expression. The humiliating disputes in the Anglican Church respecting the Prayer Book controversy is a saddening commentary on the spiritual outlook in religion which makes details of order and practices such objects of grave importance as to, for a time, at least, obscure the true spiritual interests of Christians. The lesson which the disputants have need to learn is one which our fathers in the faith taught long ago. They observed and practised it under obloquy and many disadvantages. The lesson they taught, and which we have learnt, is the duty of respecting conscientious religious beliefs of whatever kind and of crediting opposing convictions with the same earnest sincerity as we claim for ourselves. Until the Christian world arrives at some such conviction as this there will always be acrimonious disputes and grave difficulties obscuring and, at times, overwhelming the simple freedom of spirit that was in Christ Jesus. Non-subscription to man-made creeds and dead opinions appears to be the only outlet to the *impasse* which is rapidly bringing the religious life of England into a false position.

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The Cavell Film.

The controversy respecting the wisdom of exhibiting war films has been brought to a head in connection with the featuring of Nurse Cavell in a production by Mr. Herbert Wilcox, entitled "Dawn." The producer invited Sir Austin Chamberlain to a private view of the film. In a letter declining the invitation, Sir Austin declares that "he feels the strongest repugnance" to the exhibition of the film. In feeling obliged to decline the invitation the Foreign Secretary says, "The story of Nurse Cavell is a very noble one, and her memory will be held in reverence, not only by her countrymen, but by all, to whatever country they belong, whether friend or former enemy, who admire selfless devotion to duty and a serene fortitude in the hour of trial." While recognising that "it may be possible to present such a story pictorially without loss of its beauty and without danger of controversy when the lapse of years has made it history," Sir Austin feels "that it is more beautiful in his memory than any picture could make it." That being the case "in no circumstances would he care to see the exhibition." Assuming the accounts he had read in the papers to be correct as he presumed they were "he would be even less willing to attend the performance. Believing that "certain incidents as presented in the film and their representation can only provoke controversy over the grave of a woman who has become one of the world's heroines" he knows no authority to justify them. He reminds the producer of the film that "Nurse Cavell had no thought of fame or self, and asks what her feelings would have been if she had thought that such a use was to be made of her sacrifice." The letter is indeed a finely phrased expression by a high-minded gentleman of what the vast mass of his fellow countrymen feel and think on the subject with which he deals. It is very doubtful whether there is anything to be said for war films in general. The protest of Mr. John Galsworthy in a London paper on the

subject seems to be difficult to meet when he says, "reproduction of one millionth part of the horror and misery which every day of the war brought would be enough to ensure the utter failure of any of these films. They are, therefore, in no sense educational, for they cannot tell anything even remotely like the truth. Indeed, to tell the truth about war in a film would be quite impossible. Even if cases can be imagined in which there is really something to be said for a war film, Nurse Cavell's stands surely in a class apart. No delicacy of treatment—such as that in "Dawn" can remove it from this class. In defining that conviction so finely and decisively Sir Austin has performed a public service and deserves the thanks of all—and they must be very many—who share the sentiments to which he has given noble expression.

* * *

Christians or Unitarians ?

The statement given on another page respecting Toc H. and Unitarian padres will be read with as much astonishment as regret. It is, indeed, difficult to believe that an organisation based on the broad principles of brotherhood and mutual service, and welded together by memories of comradeship, quite irrespective of creed, in the War should have begun at this late date a process of exclusion against Unitarian ministers on the ground that they are not "ministers of the Christian religion." We are glad to learn that protests have already been made by certain branches and groups, and that the letters in which the ruling of the Executive Council has been conveyed to those whom it most concerns have expressed cordial goodwill on personal grounds.

* * *

All Over Again.

It looks as if the whole question of the right of a Unitarian to be called Christian will have to be taken up and discussed once more, though, like some of those who have been going over the arguments for and against the new Prayer Book this week, we are very weary of the whole subject. How sorrowfully would the Master himself, if he were on earth, regard the efforts of many who claim to be his followers to test a man's discipleship by his acceptance of a creed which he did not formulate, and which many recite glibly enough without following his teaching."—"The Inquirer," February, 11th.

Belfast Domestic Mission.

The continued need for and success of this admirable institution depends to a great extent on the practical sympathy and support its officers and Missionary receive from the members of our Churches, and more especially from those in and around Belfast.

Mrs. E. R. Jackson, the indefatigable Hon. Sec. desires to call the attention of the friends of the Mission to the fact that the Rev. Matthew Watkins of Park Lane, Wigan, will deliver the Annual Sermons on March 18th in the morning at All Souls' Church, Elmwood Avenue, and in the Evening at the First Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street. The Annual Meeting will be held on the following day March 19th at 8 p.m. in the Central Hall. Will the friends of the Mission kindly make a note of the above dates.

Correspondence

The Editor is not responsible for the views expressed by correspondents.

All communications to the Editor should be sent not later than the 16th of each month to Rev. D. J. Williams, The Manse, Killinchy, Co. Down.

26 College Green,
Feb. 13th. Belfast.

Dear Sir,

I am sorry that in my report of the work of the Huxley Public Utility Society, Dublin, I was inaccurate in stating that the houses in Belfast were built under the auspices of the Assembly's College. They were built by the Belfast Social Service Society, Ltd., for which the Rev. Prof. Corkey, of the Assembly's College, acted as Hon. Sec.

Yours faithfully, DORA MELLONE.

To the Editor of the NON-SUBSCRIBING PRESBYTERIAN.

Dear Sir,—Like many others I feel gratified that you give your readers the short articles on the Prayer Book about which there are such controversies in England, particularly about the Communion Service the result of which I hope will be Disestablishment and Disendowment as we had in Ireland. I am particularly interested in the Communion Service, reminding me as it does of my first communion in Larne as Assistant to the late Rev. Classon Porter. There were then at least 60 members (some

were children, of course) of the name of Nelson. One family of that historic name consisting of father, mother, and six young folks were present at that Service. There is but one member of that family living to-day in Ireland. Two sons survive in America. The surviving Miss Nelson has recently lost an elder sister, a gentle uncomplaining, sufferer for many years, but tended as she was assiduously by the survivor.

Although the deceased Miss Nelson was debarred from attending Church for many years, yet she was most loyal hearted and a staunch Unitarian—descended as she was from two old Kilwaughter families (Nelson and Locke) who were members of the Old Congregation from the foundation thereof. Her remains were accompanied by a very large concourse of friends and neighbours, to their last resting-place in Kilwaughter New Cemetery.

JAMES KENNEDY.

The Josephine Butler Centenary, 1828-1928

"There is no evil in the world so great that God cannot raise up to meet it a corresponding beauty and glory which will blaze it out of countenance."—J. BUTLER

Josephine Butler's Claim to Remembrance.

The Centenary of the birth of Josephine Butler, "the most heroic and sympathetic figure of the nineteenth century," who was born on April 13th, 1828, will be celebrated in the spring of 1928. This beautiful and highly gifted woman, whose courage, faith and vision make her "one of the great people of the world," as her friend and co-worker Professor James Stuart proudly and rightly claimed, has a special claim on our gratitude and remembrance, for it was she, above all others, who founded and inspired the movement against State Regulation of Prostitution.

This system, which had its origin in France under Napoleon I., was in force in most European countries in the first part of the nineteenth century, and was then considered to be the only method of reducing disease and keeping prostitution within reasonable limits. It was introduced into certain towns in England by a series of Acts (passed in 1864, 1866 and 1869), known as the Contagious Diseases Acts. Both medical and police authorities believed that prostitution was a social necessity and that its anti-social consequences could be obviated by State control and repressive methods directed against women alone. Josephine Butler saw more clearly. For her the guiding principle of law was justice. She believed that principle to be founded on the teachings of Christ. State Regulation violated this divine principle, therefore it must be steadfastly opposed. Based, as it was, on injustice and inequality, and a belief in the necessity of evil, she knew that it must fail and must inevitably increase the very evils it sought to suppress. In 1869 the first public protest against the English system was made under her leadership. It was the beginning of a world-wide campaign against Regulation in all its forms that has not yet ended. During her life she was "the head and front of the movement" and is still its inspiration.

To-day country after country is abandoning the Regulation system. Its futility and injustice are completely demonstrated by the Report of the Experts Committee of the League of Nations on the Traffic in Women and Children issued this year. Public opinion is changing on the whole question of social morality. Ignorance, prejudice and wilful blindness are being replaced by scientific study and frank discussion. Prostitution, though it still exists, is no longer universally accepted as either necessary or inevitable. There is a growing conviction that the moral law is equally binding on men and women. We are beginning to realise how much of this change is due to Mrs. Butler's challenge. In 1869 she was a voice crying in the wilderness, to-day, a cloud of witnesses has arisen on every side to call her blessed.

Temperance Notes.

The Liquor Trade and Taxation.

A letter to "The Spectator" calls attention to a subject which must be of the deepest interest to all who have the cause of Temperance at heart. A great advertising scheme has been initiated in the leading newspapers of England at immense cost by the Distillers' Company. The object of this colossal expenditure may be explained in different ways. It is undoubtedly intended to increase the sale and consumption of alcoholic spirits. Indirectly it may be aimed at the Chancellor of the Exchequer with a view to softening his heart. In any case it is filling the pockets of the owners of

the Press, and so making it very difficult for editors to write impartially on any subject affecting the Trade. For some time it has been hard enough to find an unbiassed account of the success or otherwise of Prohibition in America, or of government control in Carlisle. Should the Chancellor of the Exchequer be influenced in favour of a reduction of the taxes in alcohol, the consequences would undoubtedly be serious. Education has done much in bringing about the reduction of intemperance, but it will be gladly admitted that a very important part in this most beneficial change has been due to the high cost of strong drink. If the return of prosperous times, for which everybody is praying and working, should be accompanied by a cheapening of intoxicants, then there would be much cause to fear a recurrence of the heavy drinking which was such a marked characteristic of Victorian days.

Increase in number of licensed clubs.

We are all familiar with the saying "Out of the frying-pan into the fire." The spirit-grocery is a thing of the past, and few will mourn its demise. Is the club coming to take its place, and do more than the same amount of moral mischief? We congratulated ourselves that a great danger to family life had been removed, when it was made impossible for tippling women to deceive their husbands by purchasing drink which was too often entered in the pass-book as food for the children. Since 1923 three hundred and thirty-five spirit-grocers' licences have been extinguished. Nobody will deny the value of this wonderful achievement. There are still to be seen in Ballymacarrett on these mid-winter days, children without boots or stockings, but the number is smaller. That any of the little ones should be reduced to such a state of destitution is at least partly owing to the Club, of which the father is a member. There were 53 registered clubs in Northern Ireland prior to the passing of the 1923 Act, now there are 70. In round figures the amount of money expended in Clubs in that period on drink has doubled. From £38,426 the figure has jumped to £76,202. Some of these institutions may meet a social want. The Reform Club and others of that type provide a "home from home." But what can be said of those where a queue of men is to be seen waiting for the opening of the doors on Sunday morning? Is it necessary that Golf Clubs should have bars? Is the ordinary public house not sufficiently plentiful and convenient to meet all legitimate needs? Is it because of the facilities provided for Sunday tippling that the Club is in demand? There seems good reasons for regarding the licensed club as one of the principal dangers to the growth of temperance.

* * *

Catholics and Temperance.

A work of great importance and far-reaching in its effects is being carried on in Ireland by our friends of the Catholic Church. We rejoice greatly in the success of their efforts and pray that the blessing of Almighty God may attend their labours. Protestants are not always well-informed as to what is being done in the interests of temperance by the oldest Church within the Christian fold. A meeting was lately held in Belfast of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association and was largely attended. The Rev. J. Flinn, S.J., St. Xavier's, Dublin, who seems to be the soul of the movement, was present and delivered a very eloquent and moving address. There was great enthusiasm, and not without cause. The movement is carried on for the glory of God on the lines of self-denial. In reply to the question, "Why am I a pioneer?" Father Flynn said "For Thy greater glory and consolation, O Sacred Heart of Jesus, for Thy sake to give good example, to practice self-denial, to make reparation to Thee for the sins of intemperance, and to obtain the conversion of excessive drinkers." The membership of the association exceeds 300,000, and is rapidly growing. The pledge taken is life-long. An emblem is always worn; but if the pledge should unfortunately be violated this emblem must be returned. Thus the members are known to each other; and friendliness is encouraged. Perhaps members of Protestant Total Abstinence Societies might learn a lesson from this commendable practice. The use of an emblem has been almost entirely dropped. Forty years ago, the blue ribbon in the button hole was very commonly seen. Would it not help the cause if this useful and desirable custom could be resuscitated? The numbers of abstainers are large. Encouragement would be given to the weak and hesitating if those who have taken a decided stand, and are not ashamed to let it be known, displayed their colours.

"SENEX."

Power.

In the parable of the Ten Virgins, the term Kingdom is used in a more restricted sense than the general sense, which in its own way is quite true. Personal discipleship is referred to, the demands of which were severe. It was a thing requiring effort, "the violent take it by force," it had to be striven for, to be won. The Bridegroom who here represents Christ, comes and opens the door and closes it. He is the Initiator into the Mysteries of the Kingdom and the passing through the door is Initiation. There were few who understood, few who responded. But just when Christ was here was a tremendous opportunity. The line is familiar: "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which if taken at the flood leads on to fortune."

There were those who came forward and they become Apostles, and pioneers in the Church. Perhaps in the hour of trial and temptation their lamps flickered; but they rallied and kept them burning in the dark times through which they had to pass, and men now look back in awe and gratitude for the great work they did, for the illumination they carried throughout the world, and we sing the Te Deum: "The Glorious Company of the Apostles praise Thee." There was all the force and power of the Master's magnetism present with them. It is very hard to explain it. But we get an idea of it, in the influence of a great man upon others.

What a great influence for instance was that of Lord Haig, whose body lay in state, the coffin covered with the Union Jack and on it his helmet and sword, first in St. Columba's Presbyterian Church in London, where 60,000 people passed before his coffin, and soldiers who had fought under him came forward and involuntarily saluted. Some of us heard the service in Westminster Abbey, where the pipers played "The Flowers of the Forest," and the buglers sounded "The Last Post." In St. Giles, Edinburgh, vast multitudes filed through the Cathedral where the coffin rested in the Chapel of the Order of the Thistle. On the Waverley line, coming from Edinburgh Dryburgh Abbey at Melrose, where Sir Walter Scott is buried, can be seen, and there is where all that was mortal of Lord Haig now rests. We may have heard at the time, the description of the crowds which lined the streets while the coffin was taken from St. Giles' to the Waverley Station, and of how it was finally taken to the family burial ground, on a farm-wagon, in its simplicity a wonderful dignity, in the last honours. Presbyterian includes our own Church, and thus we too had our share in the great memorial service held at the Assembly Hall, Belfast, for our own men who had fought at the Front, were not unrepresented. A great soldier, who did more for his country than his country knew. We have only to read the tribute of Marshal Foch to realise how Lord Haig resisted a terrific pressure at a time when the odds were terribly against him; but, he stood firm, and then he struck in as though he meant to win, and his German opponents have expressed their admiration of him, as a great soldier.

You think of the personal influence of a man like that, and we know of the enormous good work he did after the War, and we realise how he could give an inspiration to others, how men through him received power to do great things.

But, there was a greater general than any military general, one before whom the greatest generals have bowed in reverence, and that was the Lord Christ, and He had a grim battle to fight, the full meaning of which we shall never know; but, He gave men the power to become Sons of God—a glorious sentence. They achieved great things, that without Him they would never have dreamt of. While He was with them, they had great opportunities, which they could seize, if they kept the flame of aspiration burning, if they did not through heedlessness or lack of faith permit their lamps to go out.

The lesson is that such opportunities do come, may come to-day, may come now, as they did then. "Watch therefore, and what I say unto you, I say unto all—watch."

ULLIN.

One Prayer Book For All.

Bishop of London and the Need for Tolerance

"We want to find a Prayer Book which will appeal to the people. At present they are parted by words which they do not understand and never will understand at all," said the Bishop of London, preaching recently at Gray's Inn Chapel, London, W.C.

"Far from being more Roman, the new Prayer Book would in many ways be more evangelical. For instance, for the first

time in the history of the Prayer Book it would embody extempore prayer. Another point is that the translation would be brought up to date, so that instead of using a bad translation a good one would be used."

Pleading for tolerance, Dr. Ingram said: "We really must try and understand one another's positions. As a great bishop once said when I was a young man, 'Truth is a cube, not a flat.' Therefore we should have one book embodying alternative viewpoints for those who love one Lord in order that it may be successful."

Toc H. and Unitarian Padres.

The Executive Council of Toc H. has ruled that in future Unitarian ministers cannot be sanctioned as padres in that organization. In a letter to one of our ministers conveying this decision, the Hon. Administrator, Mr. Peter Monie says, "the wording of the Charter under which we are incorporated shows that the padres are to be 'ministers of the Christian religion' of any denomination."

The Executive Council evidently felt that loyalty to the terms of the Charter of incorporation required them to determine who is and who is not a Christian. They ruled that only Trinitarians are Christians.

Such a ruling is open to the objection that you cannot tell whether or not a man is a Christian by his denominational label. The most worthless man might call himself a Christian and be accepted as a padre, whereas the saintliest and most worthy—a Channing or a Martineau or a Drummond or a Stopford Brooke—would be excluded.

The decision has caused intense dissatisfaction among the rank and file in the branches and groups affected, who, wishing to retain their Unitarian padres, have protested against the ruling in the strongest terms. Protests have also been made by a Unitarian and a Congregationalist padre of one of the North London branches, and by one of the Hon. Presidents of Toc H.

In spite of protests the Executive Council have reaffirmed their decision, and in a letter of February 2nd, Mr. Monie says they have "decided again not to appoint ministers of any church which describes itself as Unitarian to be padres of Toc H branches or groups." A motion will be brought forward by them at the next meeting of the Central Council in April, which will be asked to confirm their action.

It is to be hoped that meanwhile the matter will be carefully considered by Toc H branches and groups everywhere, and that they will express their opinion about it. It would be a great pity if a movement with so fine and catholic a spirit and such large and generous ideals suddenly woke up one day to find itself transformed into something narrowly sectarian. And what do our readers think of the ruling that no Unitarian can be a Christian?—From "The Inquirer," February 11th, 1928.

Heresy.

Text, Acts 24: 14.—"After the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers."

The triumph of Christianity is nothing more than the triumph of a heresy. If Jesus had accepted unquestioningly the orthodox religious teaching of his time he would never have been put to death as a heretic. Consequently the Cross is the greatest symbol of heresy the world has ever known.

The Apostle Paul, to whom Christianity owes so much, threw over the orthodox Judaism of his time in order to worship God in "the way which they call heresy."

From the historian's point of view it is very curious that Christianity which owes its existence to heretics, that is to say, to comparatively few men who formed their own religious opinions instead of conforming to orthodoxy, should become a persecuting religion, doing all in its power to prevent people from forming their own religious opinions.

The persecution of heretics by the Church forms one of the blackest chapters in history and historically speaking this chapter closes with the Reformation, though many people seem to be unaware of this fact.

That Protestantism is a heresy pure and simple is not usually realised by the majority of people, least of all by those who allow their religious zeal to run away with their historical knowledge.

Unfortunately this is sometimes forgotten even by those well acquainted with Christian history, with the result that the world is sometimes treated to the pathetic spectacle of a group of these heretics forming themselves into an ecclesiastical court for the purpose of trying another heretic.

A better instance of the kettle bringing an indictment against the pot for being black, it would be difficult to find. Is it any wonder that the thinking man turns away from religion when he finds a group of men whose forefathers first proclaimed the great Protestant principle of private judgement as opposed to orthodox church doctrine, presuming to put on trial a man whose own judgment leads him to different religious conclusions from those accepted by the party to which he belongs.?

Such deplorable incidents are due to the fallacious notion that heresy or in other words, a religious opinion different from that in general acceptance, is harmful to religion and must be resisted at all costs.

Historically there is not the slightest reason for this presupposition. On the contrary the evidence points in the opposite direction, that is to say, it is heretics—men who have dared to form their own religious opinions—who have contributed most to man's spiritual and moral well-being. It is heretics who have turned the stagnant pool of theological dogmatism into the living water of true religion.

It is no exaggeration to say that religion owes much more to heretics than it does to those who have persecuted them. How much poorer the Christian Religion would be without the Old Testament Prophets, Paul, Luther and a thousand other heretics who had the courage to reject the orthodox religious beliefs of their time?

Heresy is not the enemy of religion as many well-meaning people seem to think. It is the enemy of theology.

When the world realises the profound difference between theology and religion it will cease to brand as a heretic, a man whose religious experience does not run into the moulds made by orthodox theologians.

S. P. WHITEHOUSE.

IN MEMORIAM.

BARRON.—In ever loving memory of a dear brother, William Douglas Barron, who passed away on February 13th, 1925, aged 22 years.

"A Pagan Belief."

Dr. Barnes and the Practice of Reservation.

"The belief that I or anyone else can cause a spiritual presence to adhere in or attach itself to any material object is a superstition. Such a belief is pagan, a part of primitive religion. It is a common ingredient in lower forms of religion. It is not Christian." So said the Bishop of Birmingham, Dr. Barnes, preaching at Moseley Parish Church, Sunday, February 12th.

He added that the practice of reservation encouraged the belief that the priest had in consecration given spiritual properties to the bread and wine of Holy Comminion. If such superstitious errors were covertly permitted within the Church it would before very long cease to be either established or endowed as the Church of the English nation. Nothing had distressed him more during recent years than that they should have to give their energies to resisting such degeneration of the faith of the Church.

Reports.

First Church : Belfast.—Sunday School Party and distribution of prizes took place in the Central Hall, on Thursday evening, 16th February. There was a good attendance of teachers and scholars and friends. After tea the prizes were given out by the Superintendent, Mr. Robert M'Crum. A good programme of dramatic performances by the teachers and elder scholars, and games, made up a very enjoyable evening, everyone left feeling satisfied, and looking forward to their next reunion on 15th March.

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Belfast Women's League.—The District Branch of the Unitarian Women's League hold their quarterly meeting at Mountpottinger Unitarian Church on Friday, January 27th. Mrs. Eustace Thompson, of Cairncastle, conducted the service in the evening, after which tea was served in the schoolroom. The members later gathered to hear Miss Willa Sayers, B.A., give a talk on "The Adult School Movement." Miss Eileen Andrews, of Comber, the President of the District League, introduced the speaker, and proposed the vote of thanks at the end of the meeting.

Belfast Domestic Mission.—The Secretary, Mrs. E. R. Jackson would be grateful for old Reports, between the years 1913 and 1920, which could be left in the Depository.

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Ballyclare.—The annual business meeting of the Congregation took place in the Church on Wednesday evening, February 1st, at 7-30 p.m. The treasurer submitted the statement of accounts which revealed a very satisfactory state of affairs. After the re-appointment of office-bearers and committee for the year with the addition to the latter of the name of Mr. Herbert Scott, the minister was asked to retire temporarily from the chair. On the invitation to return after a brief absence the announcement that the congregation had voted him a bonus out of the surplus of funds on the year's working, came as a very great surprise. A similar agreeable surprise was also in store for our esteemed organist. On the conclusion of the business end of the meeting an adjournment was made to the schoolroom where tea was in readiness. The following had charge of the tea tables : Mrs. Bingham, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Forsythe, Miss J. Harson, Miss Hogarth, and Miss J. Laird. A musical programme was later submitted by members of the Guild. Among the contributors were Mrs. Moore, Miss Horner, Mr. J. Laird and Messrs. W. & J. Harson, all of whom had to respond to encores. A feature of the evening was the presentation by Miss Hogarth and Miss A. Montgomery of two sketches entitled "the Crystal Gazer," and "Cheerful and, Musical." These were appropriately staged and exceedingly well acted, eliciting much favourable comment. This was the third meeting of the guild this winter, all of which have been most enjoyable. The next meeting which is fixed for February 29th will take the form of a bachelor's night. A Peace Service was held in the church on the evening of December 18th. Special carol music being rendered by an augmented choir under the leadership of Mrs. Moore, A.L.C.M. The service was most successful and exceptionally well attended. The preacher was the Rev. A. M. Bell, B.A. On December 20th the annual Xmas party and prize distribution was held in the schoolroom. Tea was prepared for the young people shortly after five o'clock and dispensed by the teachers ably assisted by several scholars. A second tea was partaken of later in the evening when most of the adults had gathered, the interval being filled with music and games. Subsequent

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to the distribution of book prizes to the successful scholars a programme was provided consisting of songs, recitations, and piano-forte solos contributed to chiefly by the pupils of the school and members of the Choir. Just prior to the close of the entertainment, Father Xmas paid his usual visit and distributed from his capacious bag valuable gifts to all the young people present. Recently our congregation has suffered heavily through death. On December 23rd, Miss Elizabeth Gregg passed away after a long and very severe illness. Within a few short weeks two other members of the same family in the persons of Mr. Samuel Gregg and Miss Eliza Jane Gregg were laid to rest by her side in the New Cemetery. While on February 5th, we sustained further loss in the death of Mrs. Peoples an esteemed member of the congregation. The services in the homes and at the graveside were conducted by the minister. To the relatives and friends we tender our very sincere sympathy in their bereavement.

* * *

Bangor.—The Mountpottinger Unitarian Choir, conducted by Mr. Henry I. Sheppard, Organist—Mr. White rendered their Sacred Christmas Cantata "Star of the East" at the Unitarian Hall (65 Main Street) Bangor on Sunday, 22nd January, at 3-30 p.m. A short Service dealing with the Cantata was given by the Rev. A. Whitford. A number of the Mountpottinger congregation came with the Choir, and their Bangor friends wish to thank them for the rendering of the Cantata, and also those who remained over for the evening Service. After the Cantata, Tea was served by the Ladies of the congregation. The usual evening Service was held at 7 p.m. by the Rev. A. Whitford.

* * *

Cairncastle.—The Annual Meeting of the Old Meeting House Congregation was held on Thursday, 2nd February. There were rather more than twice as many people present as attended the corresponding function last year. That was largely owing to a general desire to do honour to Miss Agnes M'Meekin, as the Congregation had decided to present her with a modest gift in token of their esteem and their gratitude for her long service as a collector of stipend between twenty and thirty years; now that ill health had made it impossible for her to attend to that piece of work or even to attend for worship at the Meeting House except on comparatively infrequent occasions. They presented her with an arm-chair in which they hope she will find a very comfortable seat by her fire-side for very many days. The presentation speech was made by Mr. James M'Clelland. After the business of the meeting had been disposed of (consisting of the hearing of annual reports, and appointment of Committees, etc.) the company were entertained with dancing, singing, games and conversation until midnight; and enjoyed themselves so well that they resolved to hold another social gathering at a near date to which they would invite a good many friends in other congregations in the neighbourhood.

* * *

Comber Women's League.—Our New Year started with a service conducted by Mrs. Slipper of Newry. Her address was much appreciated. Miss Jennie Adams sang beautifully "It is the hour of Prayer." There was a very good attendance despite the very rough weather. The February monthly meeting was given to hearing a wonderfully vivid description of the South Sea Islands, the natives and their habits, the luscious fruit ready for the asking; the account of R. L. Stevenson's last resting-place. The talk was enlivened with humorous accounts of travel incidents and splendid photographs taken by the lecturer Mrs. E. R. Jackson. The hearty vote of thanks was passed to Mrs. Jackson on the motions of Miss Eileen Anderson and Mrs. D. Munn. On February 14th, St. Valentine's Day, a most successful venture of the League took place. In order to raise funds a Valentine Party was organised. Valentines were made and sold to the guests who posted them in a most realistic pillar-box to someone in the room. It was noticed that the bachelors had the greatest number but the minister received a goodly number. It was voted a thoroughly delightful and jolly evening and the Women's League was delighted at the financial result, somewhere about £20 being taken. The artistes whose services were greatly enjoyed were Miss Curran of Belfast, Mrs. R. Johnston of Comber, Master Jim Taggart of Belfast and two of our own members, Mrs. Hugh Ferguson and Miss Jennie Adams. The accompaniments were played by Miss Curran, Mrs. Johnston, Mrs. R. Ferguson, and Miss Murphy. After the entertainment and distribution of valentines and a most plentiful tea, dancing took place. Mr.

Gillespie had kindly volunteered to bring musicians from Belfast. They played splendidly and as it is Leap Year, and was St. Valentine's Day and the Women's League were the hostesses, ladies had the option of seeking partners. It was all good fun and it was estimated that about 200 people were present. Our March monthly evening will be addressed on the 5th, at 8 p.m., by Miss Heron, the Hon. Sec. of the Girls Club Union. The girls in the drill team of the Social Service Club from the Mission will drill and folk dance. Mrs. James Andrews has the musical portion in charge. The children of the Sunday school are invited for this evening and any members of the congregation also.

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Grey Abbey.—The annual meeting and social of this Church was held on the 2nd February. After tea, provided by the ladies of the congregation, the minister (Rev. W. H. Townley Tilson, M.A.) was moved to the chair, and the annual reports presented ; these showed the financial position and the church activities to be in a very satisfactory condition.

Votes of thanks were passed to Mr. Taylor, secretary, and Mr. Barnes, treasurer, for the able manner in which they performed their duties ; to Mr. S. Patton, who each year presents to the Sunday school special prizes ; and to Mrs. Tilson and the choir.

Mr. Taylor and Mr. Barnes were re-elected secretary and treasurer rspectively. Messrs. H. Turney, W. Regan, Adam Patton and R. Davidson were elected to fill the vacancies on the Committee caused by the four members who retire annually.

The prizes having been distributed to the Sunday school pupils, the choir members contributed the following programme : Solos, Miss L. Moreland, Messrs. Turney, J. and A. Moreland, and Hughes ; duets, Miss Davidson, Miss M. Hamilton ; recitations, Miss Hamilton, Miss Yaeman ; choruses (male), Messrs Moreland, Turney, Hughes, Tilson ; (ladies), Miss Moreland, Miss Reid, Miss Mawhinney, Miss Rebecca and Miss Cissie Wright, and ventriloquial items by Mr. D. Tilson. At the final rehearsal for the social Miss L. Moreland, on behalf of the choir, presented Mrs. Tilson with a box of embroidered handkerchiefs.

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Holywood.—A social gathering of the members of the First Presbyterian (Non-Subscribing) Congregation, was held in the Schoolroom on Friday evening, February 10th. The tea was very generously given by Mr. W. Patterson, of Kilmore, and was served by ladies of the congregation. There was a large and representative attendance. After tea, Miss Rosamond Praeger, gave a delightful talk on " Some local Fairy Tales and Ghost Stories," made up for the most part of folk-lore of the country side, which as a girl she had heard from the mouths of old residents, and had put into writing as far as possible, in the dialect. They were charming old-world stories, charmingly told, and the spontaneous applause which greeted the close of each tale and the end of the talk, showed unmistakeably the delight which young and old alike found in them. There followed a short programme of music, in which the following took part, Miss Sparrow Messrs. W. J. Harvey, J. Shannon, jun., W. Shannon and H. Shannon, jun., and competitions arranged by the Misses Harvey, the prizes for which were kindly given by Mrs. Omar Nelson, and Mrs. Ronald Williams The evening was a very successful and happy one, and at its close the minister thanked the donor of the feast and the ladies who had dispensed it, Miss Praeger, the musicians, the givers of the prizes and all who had helped towards the pleasure of the gathering.

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Mountpottinger.—The Choir was asked to repeat for the benefit of the Bangor Congregation the Cantata " Star of the East " which was given in the Church during December. This was done at a special afternoon Service held in the new meeting place at Bangor on January 22nd when there was a very good attendance.

In order that the Choir might remain to help with the evening Service at Bangor the Church Committee authorised the suspension of our own evening Service that day and a representative number of our members went down to swell the Bangor Congregation. The Annual Sunday-school prize giving took place on Wednesday, January 25th. Mr. T. M'Murray, jun., was in the chair, and the prizes were distributed by Rev. A. Whitford, of Moneyrea, to twenty-two children, three of whom had made unbroken attendances, Evelyn Beattie and her two brothers, Harold and Andrew. Mr. Whitford also presented to Mr. E. R. Jackson, Superintendent of the school, the Sunday School Association's medal for long service, Mr. Jackson having been a teacher for thirty-four years, first at Mill Hill, Leeds, and then at Mountpottinger.

The Moneyrea Players presented two sketches, "Billy's Little Flutter, and "The Lady Magistrate," which caused much amusement. Santa Claus paid a welcome, though belated, visit to distribute the gifts which had been posted in a huge letter-box.

With much regret we record the passing of Molly Edgar, whose family has been so long and honourably connected with the Congregation. The deceased was a very faithful member of the Sunday School and Choir so long as her health held good.

The interment took place on January 26th and was conducted by Rev. A. Whitford.

It is anticipated that the Memorial Font to the late Misses J. & M. Davidson will be dedicated at a special afternoon Service by Rev. M. Watkins to be held on March 18th, as on that date Mr. Watkins has consented to be in Belfast to preach the annual Services on behalf of the Domestic Mission.

Mountpottinger Women's League.—A social and Valentine Party was held in the schoolroom on Wednesday evening, February 15th—visitors from 1st Church and the mission joined with our own members, making a large gathering. Items were contributed by Mrs. J. Allen, Miss A. Beattie, Miss M. Lindsay, and Miss Nellie Fluke; dances by the Social Service Girls' Club Team, and a sketch entitled "St. Valentine's Day" by the Misses E. Beattie and B. Johnston. Tea was served during the evening and competitive games enjoyed. Miss Margaret Milligan officiated at the piano.

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Newry.—The Minor Town Hall, Newry, presented a busy scene on Wednesday afternoon and evening, January 18th, when the members of the Newry First Presbyterian (Unitarian) Church held a variety sale and entertainment to assist the fund which they have opened for the provision of a new organ in their Church. The various stalls were very nicely set out and bore goods both of good quality and excellent to look upon. The Rev. Geo. J. Slipper (minister) and Mrs. Slipper were at the head of the band of energetic and willing workers, who made the event such a splendid success. The stall holders were as follows: Work Stall—Mrs. C. Warnock and Miss Sarah Warnock: Cake and Refreshment Stall—Miss Warnock, Miss M. Warnock, Mrs. T. S. M'Kinstry, and Mrs. J. Thompson; helpers—Misses M. Little, J. Little, E. Gillespie, S. Cowan, Mrs. J. Cowan, Mrs. Brice Rowland and Mrs. Haddon. Sweet Stall—Mrs. R. J. M'Combe Mrs. G. M'Alpine; helpers Misses M. M'Combe, Ina M'Combe, A. Mitchell, and Miss M. Lockhart. Produce Stall—Mrs. Henning, Miss E. Mitchell. Book Stall—Rev. G. J. Slipper. Bran Tub—Misses Maisie Weir, Muriel Thompson, and Master Gordon M'Kinstry. Games and Shooting—Mr. C. Warnock, Mr. J. Thompson, Mr. Meek, Mr. T. S. M'Kinstry, Mr. W. M'Cracken Mr. Craig, Mr. R. Mitchell. Puzzles—Mrs. Slipper.

Concerts—Mrs. Slipper. The concerts were undoubtedly a special feature of the day. They were excellent and were much enjoyed by all. Mrs. Moore, of Ballyclare, gave much pleasure by her singing, also Miss May Wallace, of Belfast. The Misses Eileen Miller and Rita Bennett, of Belfast, danced exquisitely, and the recitations by Miss E. Miller and Miss Montgomery, of Ballyclare, were unusually good. There was also a good deal of local talent shown. The violin solos and all the pianoforte solos given at the concerts were played by pupils of Miss Cleland, who acted as accompanist at the second concert. The members are greatly indebted to Mr. Harry Heather, of Warrenpoint, who kindly acted in that capacity at the first concert. The programmes were—No. 1 Concert—Pianoforte solo, Miss Elsie Donley; song, Miss May Wallace; recitation, Miss Montgomery; song, Mrs. Moore, A.L.C.M.; dance, Misses Eileen Miller and Rita Bennett; violin solo, Mr. Charles Armstrong; song, Mrs. Moore, A.L.C.M.; recitation, Miss Eileen Miller, pianoforte solo, Miss Kathleen Mulligan. Concert No. 2—Pianoforte solo, Miss Nora Auterson; recitation, Miss Montgomery; song, Mrs. Moore, A.L.C.M., violin solo, Miss Mary Doyle; song, Miss May Wallace; Pianoforte Solo, Miss Dorothy Pollock; recitation, Miss Eileen Miller; song, Mr. Morris; dance, Misses Eileen Miller, and Rita Bennett; song, Mrs. Moore, A.L.C.M. The winners of the prizes in the various competitions were as follows: Sultana cake—Miss M. Ferguson. Sponge sandwich—Mrs. G. Savage. Butter sandwich—Miss Ida Donnelly. Oven soda bread—Mrs. James Thompson, Canal Street Griddle soda bread—Miss Lizzie Cowan. Tea scones—Mrs. A. Sinclair. The judges were—Mrs. Truesdale and Mrs. Topp. Jam and Jelly Competition—Jam—Mrs. Scrimgeour. Jelly—Mrs. Scrimgeour. Judges—Miss I Foster and Mrs. Grant. Shilling Competition—Mrs. M'Kee, of Downshire Road.

Newtownards.—The annual meeting was held on 8th February, and after tea, Rev. W. H. Townley-Tilson, M.A., presided. Mr. Hugh Ferguson presented the treasurer's statement of accounts, which was considered most satisfactory, all accounts showing an increase, while satisfaction was expressed at an increase in the church membership.

Mr. Hugh Ferguson and Mr. Jim Bailie were elected treasurer and assistant treasurer respectively, and Mr. J. Murphy, and Mr. A. Menown were appointed to the offices of secretary and assistant secretary. The Committee was chosen as follows :—Mrs. Bailie, Mrs. Menown, Mrs. Lindsay, Miss E. Ferguson, Messrs. Sandford, Hunter, M'Millan, Kennedy and M'Ninch. A cordial vote of thanks was passed to the officials for their work during the year and to Mrs. S. Bailie for having provided tea that evening.

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Templepatrick.—The Annual business meeting of this Congregation was held in the Roughfort School on Thursday evening, 2nd February, at 7-30 o'clock. Considering the severe weather the attendance was very good. After tea the chair was occupied by the minister—Rev. A. Turner. The Balance Sheet which had been audited by Mr. Wm. M'Robert of Belfast was presented and explained by the Treasurer, Mr. Archie Thompson. The Accounts shewed a diminished income in several departments. The Committee having been appointed the Treasurer was authorised to send out circulars twice each year intimating when stipend is due ; also to request the Committee, if thought necessary to appoint half dozen members of the Church to collect overdue stipend ; also to solicit subscriptions towards incidental expenses from members of the church who do not regularly attend Divine Service. During the discussion of accounts complimentary reference was made to the effort made by Mrs. Houston. Mrs. Lyle and Miss M. Kerr, whereby in November last the sum of £35 15s. 6d, was raised towards extra expenses at dance and entertainment. The thanks of the Congregation were expressed to these ladies for their helpful effort. Hearty references were also made to the children's party held in the Masonic Hall, Templepatrick, on 23rd December last. On that occasion a large company assembled including our staunch friends, Lady Campbell and Mrs. Robert Campbell who both came laden with gifts for the children. The meeting began at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and lasted till about 8-30 p.m. The children had the time of their life as also had Miss Getty who assisted Santa Claus and led generally in the entertainment. The Congregational meeting referred to above resolved itself into a conversazione and Mr. Arthur Reid sang several well-received songs. The meeting was closed about 10 clock with the Benediction.

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The Orphan Society.—The Hon. Treasurer, Mr. William M'Robert, would be very thankful and at the same time materially helped if local Treasurers could send to him at the Ulster Bank, Belfast, their completed collections by 21st March at latest. The work of the Assistant Secretary (Rev. A. Turner, Templepatrick) would also be greatly facilitated if the completed lists of subscribers could be sent to him by the same date. It is much to be desired that all subscriptions and all lists should be included in the Annual Report which is in process of being made up at that time.

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